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INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFIUU/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE  
RUZEFAA/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE  
RUZEFAA/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAO](#) [SO](#)  
SUBJECT: SOMALIA - MAY 3 DISSOLUTION OF NATIONAL MEDIA  
COUNCIL

REF: NAIROBI 623

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Summary  
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11. (SBU) On May 3, ironically World Press Freedom Day, the Transitional Federal Government's (TFG) Minister of Information abruptly dissolved Somalia's National Media Council (NMC), charged with advocating for journalists in the development of Somalia's media law. The Minister told us the NMC "existed only in name and has been out of touch" and noted that the group had never been approved by the President of the TFG (reftel). The NMC issued a statement protesting the move, while journalists appear divided on the issue. End summary.

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Media Group Dissolved  
on Press Freedom Day  
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12. (SBU) Farahan Ali Mohamed, the Transitional Federal Government's (TFG) new Minister of Information, dissolved the National Media Council (NMC) during a May 3 event commemorating World Press Freedom Day. The NMC had been charged with advocating for journalists during the development of Somalia's media law (reftel). Mohamed told us he dissolved the NMC, an advocacy association formed as called for in the draft media law, because it "existed only in name and has been out of touch" and noted that the group had never been approved by the President. Journalist associations including the Associated Somali Journalists (ASOJ) and the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) commended the move, stating that the NMC had been usurped by journalists promoting their own agendas at the expense of Somali journalists at large. The minister told us he intends to redraft the media law entirely, and the dissolution of the NMC was simply a "precursor" to that effort.

13. (SBU) The NMC issued its own statement, claiming that the dissolution was "illegal" and represented the government's interference in an independent organization. The group claimed the minister interfered with Article 19 of the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC) in dissolving the NMC. (Note: Article 19 refers to the right to assemble. End note.)

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Comment  
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14. (SBU) We inquired with Mohamed immediately upon hearing this news, and he replied immediately with remarks very similar to those in the statements by ASOJ and NUSOJ. While we are not certain of the groups' involvement in the dissolution of the NMC, the disagreement among journalist groups is perhaps another reflection of the often disparate agendas of journalist associations, which disagree, fracture, and reinvent themselves on a regular basis. We will engage thQinister, who is planning to pass through Nairobi soon, very directly on this issue, emphasizing the importance we place on a free and vibrant press as part of Somalia's rebuilding process. End comment.  
RANNEBERGER